

OUR OPINION

[Guard lot an example of what pride can accomplish](#)



Guard Insurance Group in Wilkes-Barre deserves recognition for the beautiful landscaping at its parking lot on Market and River streets. Notice the sunflower in the center of the photo?

PETE G. WILCOX/THE TIMES LEADER

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THEY PAVED PARADISE and put up a parking lot,” Joni Mitchell famously noted in 1969’s “Big Yellow Taxi.”

That’s usually the way it works: Take some land, however nice, and cover it with black top and forget about it, creating just another urban desert.

This makes what Guard Insurance Group has done with its parking lot on Market Street in Wilkes-Barre all the more remarkable: They may have paved paradise -- they certainly have a parking lot, but thanks to their vision, dedication and hard work it is as close to paradise as any parking lot we have seen.

It isn’t just the parking lot. Take a stroll along River Street past the Guard’s buildings and you’ll see what pride of ownership, a sense of civic responsibility and love of perfectly maintained plants has achieved.

It’s gorgeous. We marvel at the little touches, the curb-side plantings arranged in tidy, lovely groupings, the mulch without litter (which is the result of constant attention and maintenance), and the twin shaded benches on the corner of River and Market streets.

Turn onto River Street and gaze at their parking lot, the lovely flowers along the sidewalk, the always maintained, painted and looking-like-new parking surface. Especially notice that surrounding the yellow

mechanical arm that allows traffic in and out is a verdant little paradise, an unexpected and much welcome island of color, topped off by a sunflower plant.

We admire the beauty and grace of what Guard has done. But what really makes us proud is that they've likely done this without prodding. They want their business, including the often forgotten parking lot, to look as good as it can.

We often speak about the redevelopment of the Hotel Sterling and river portal openings as the cornerstones of Wilkes-Barre's comeback.

It's time we recognize Guard for getting there first and providing an example of what can be done when you care.

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